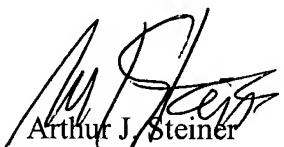


**REMARKS**

The above-referenced application has been amended to include changes in the specification. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made. Entry of this preliminary amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Date: April 4, 2002**

20040404 14:26:00

Docket No.: 50212-380

**MARKED-UP VERSION OF AMENDMENT**

The paragraph beginning at line 5 on page 20 has been amended as follows:

The buffer chamber 241 (second buffer cell 245) and the protecting tube 21 are partitioned with a partition wall 251. The partition wall 251 is formed with an optical fiber passage hole 254 through which the optical fiber 3 passes. The optical fiber passage hole 254 has an inner diameter set to about 4 to 5 mm. A major part of the gas introduced into the second buffer cell 245 is let out from the outlet duct 248 [144]. Here, the N<sub>2</sub> gas or the like is not introduced for filling the protecting tube 21 with the N<sub>2</sub> gas or the like, but for preventing the He gas or the like from flowing into the protecting tube 21.

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